



ARDEA NOVÆ-HOLLANDIÆ, *Lath.*

White-fronted Heron.

Ardea Novæ-Hollandiæ, Lath. Ind. Orn., vol. ii. p. 701.—Steph. Cont. of Shaw's Gen. Zool., vol. xi. p. 561.

White-fronted Heron, Lath. Gen. Syn., Supp., vol. ii. p. 304.—Phill. Bot. Bay, pl. in p. 163.—Penn. Outlin., vol. iv. p. 128.—Lath. Gen. Hist., vol. ix. p. 127.

Ardea leucops, Wagl. Syst. Av., *Ardea*, sp. 17.

Herodias Novæ-Hollandiæ, List of Birds in Brit. Mus. Coll., part iii. p. 80.

Wy-an, Aborigines of the lowland districts of Western Australia.

Blue Crane of the Colonists.

THE White-fronted Heron is abundantly dispersed over every part of Van Diemen's Land, the colonies of New South Wales, South Australia and Swan River; but I have never seen it from the north coast, and consequently infer that it is not found there. Low sandy beaches washed by the open ocean, arms of the sea, and the sides of rivers and lagoons, both in the interior of the country as well as near the coast, are equally tenanted by it, consequently it is one of the commonest species of the genus in all the countries above-mentioned; and may frequently be seen wading knee-deep in the water of the salt marshes in search of food, which consists of crabs, fish, and marine insects. Its flight is heavy and flapping like that of the other Herons, but it runs more quickly over the ground, and is continually moving about when searching for food, and never stands motionless in the water as the true Herons do; these active habits are in fact necessary to enable it to capture insects and crabs, upon which it mainly subsists.

Some nests I observed in the month of October 1838, on the banks of the Derwent, were placed on the tops of the smaller gum-trees, and most of them contained newly-hatched birds; Mr. Kermode informed me that it annually breeds in the neighbourhood of his estate, which is near the centre of Van Diemen's Land. The nest is of a moderate size, and is composed of sticks and leaves. The eggs are four in number, of a pale bluish green, one inch and seven-eighths long by one inch and a quarter broad.

The white colouring of the face and throat is much more extensive in some individuals than in others; and the base of the bill, the orbits and irides are deep lead-colour in some specimens, while in others those parts are pale grey, and the irides pale buff.

The stomach is very capacious, and the weight of the adult bird about one pound five ounces.

Little or no difference is observable in the sexes; but the female is somewhat smaller than her mate.

Face and throat white; crown of the head and back of the neck dark slate-colour; sides of the neck, all the upper surface and wings dark grey, tinged with brown on the wings; primaries and tail-feathers dark slate-colour; elongated feathers of the back grey, tinged with brown; elongated feathers of the breast cinnamon-brown; under surface grey, washed with rufous, which tint becomes gradually paler as it proceeds along the abdomen to the under tail-coverts; down the lower part of the neck a stripe of buff, gradually blending above with the white of the throat, and below with the cinnamon tint of the breast; irides in some lead-colour, in others yellow, and in others pale buff; orbits and base of the bill, in some pale grey, in others deep lead-colour; base of the lower mandible flesh-colour.

The figure is that of a male about four-fifths of the natural size.